

[Lois Newman]

1

FOLKSTUFF - RANGE LORE

Gauthier.Sheldon F.

Rangelore.

Tarrant Co. Dist.,#7 [45?]

Page #1

FC 240

Lois [?] Newman , 38, living at 3133 Green St. Fort Worth, Texas, was born Dec 19, 1900, in Cook co, Texas, on a farm. He learned to ride a horse while he was in his early teens, by riding the horses raised on his father's farm and became an expert horseman. At the age of 14 he took employment as a horse wrangler and cowboy on the Flying Circle Ranch. The headquarters of the ranch was on Thunder Creek, 60 miles from Gillett, Wyo. Gillette was the nearest town to the ranch and the shipping point for cattle. He continued as an employee of the ranch until 1922, at which he took up the study of stenography. He engaged in this profession for a livelihood untill 1932 at which time he recived the appointment as U.S. Commissioner of the Federal Court in the Northern District of Texas, located at Fort Worth.

His story of range life follows:

"My birth took place in Cook co. Texas, Dec 19, 1900. I was reared on a farm and my early life, as a boy, was spent as the a farm boy occupies their time on a farm.

Library of Congress

"My folks owned work and saddle horses and my greatest pleasure, hile a boy, was handling those animals. I never missed an opportunity to drive or ride a horse and I [possessed?] a natural ability for working the animals. When I was in my early teens people conceded [that I?] was an excellent rider.

"I [was unable?] to satisfy my desire for working with stock with what stock there was on our farm and to work on a cattle or horse ranch became the dominating idea in my mind. I satisfied my wish for the range in 1914, by going to Wyo. and taking a job with the Flying Circle [?] working as a horse wrangler, and cowhand.

"The headquarters of the Flying Circle Ranch was miles from Gillette. Wyo. located on Thunder Creek. [?] C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 Gillette was then our nearest town and our trading and shipping point.

"The ranch is owned by Oscar K. and Harry W. Keeline and they, during the time I worked there, ranged approximately [?] head of white face Herefords and 500 head of horses. The horses were bred from mares of the Indian breed of horses and the stallions were imported Kentucky racing stock. This breeding produced a tough and speedy saddle horse very suitable for range work.

"All of the stock grazed on an open range. The range is now fenced. I made a trip there for a visit at the ranch last summer and I found the fence about the only change made since I left the place in 1922.

"During the time I worked on the Flying Circle ranch, there was a great amount of riding to do for the purpose of keeping the cattle confined to the home range and giving the animals such attention that was required. The 30,000 head ranged over a large area. When making the Spring and Fall roundups, we started a distance of 100 mile from headquarters to gather our stock and generally found some of our brand that distance off. Of course,

Library of Congress

those critters were the strays. We tried to keep the animals grazing within a distance of 75 miles from camp.

“The strays were, for the most part, the animals which would get away while drifting before or during a storm. Just before a storm and during its duration, the entire crew of 30 hands would be riding trying to hold the herd. At such times 3 a part of the crew would be required to do noight night riding. Out side of the times during stormy weather, the only night riding we did was when we were holding a herd which were to be shipped or during the roundup when we were holding a herd to be worked.

“The ranch held two roundups each year. The Fall roundup was for the purpose of bunching the herd and cutting out animals which belonged to some other ranch. The Spring roundup was for the same general purpose as the Fall one, but primarily for branding calves. Representatives from other ranches would work with the Flying Circle ranch to take charge of their respective stock. The Flying Circle did likewise an sent a repersentative to each of the other ranches during their roundups.

“The Flying Circle owned 25 [different?] brands, which had been obtained through buying small ranches during the course of several years, but their principal brand was a circle with wings attached made thus: .

“I shall digress a moment to [explain?] how the Keeline brothers adopted their brand. Oscar K. Keeline was sitting at a table in a cafe waiting for his order of food to be served. He was trying to decide on a brand to adopt at the time. While sitting at the table his eyes focused on a ceiling fan with two blades which were revolving. That fan gave him the idea of the brand [they?] adopted and called the Flying Circle.

“This brand has been carried by cattle numbering up into the hundreds of thousands. Each Spring we would place the brand on approximately 5,000 calves.

Library of Congress

"During the roundup our workers were divided into two 4 crews, because we had such large area to cover. G.W. Keeline, son of Oscar, was the foreman of one crew and Oscar was the foreman of the other. Bob Burns, our chief cook, and his second cook, Hicks, Schabo, always went with one or the other of the crews. Each man was an excellent cook. Bob Burns came to the ranch from the East, where he had learned the trade and he had cooked in a number of the leading Eastern hotels. Therefore, our food was well cooked and we had a good variety of everything but the meat. Beef was our main meat food with some bacon occasionally. However, the beef was from prime yearlings and Burns cooked it in many different forms, so we didn't become tired of the meat. Our vegetables were the canned goods. The bread and pastery were made by the cooks and those items were well made. In fact, our meals were equal to those served by the general run of first class hotels.

"Our sleeping [quarters?] were well built and furnished with first class beds, and carefully attended to. In regards to our living, one could not wish for anything better, and the wages paid were an average of \$40,. except during the World War when wages went to up \$80. per month. Of course, when living behind the chuck-wagon the service at meals was not like that received at a table, but nothing to complain about.

"When we were working the roundup and frequently at other times, we were compeled to sleep in the open, but most men enjoy sleeping in the open when they become accustomed to it. A person feels more rested after a sleep in the open than when sleeping inside. 5 "Handling Hereford cattle is not a difficult job and according to what I have been told by old rawhides, it is play compared/ with handling the wild longhorn cattle of the early days.

"I experienced just one stampede that resulted in losing the herd and that was mostly the fault of a greener. A crew of five waddies were driving a herd of 200 cattle to Gillette for shipment to Chicago. Some of the stock were [shipped?] to Omaha, but most of the shipment were to Chicago. It required close to four days to make the drive into Gillette and [with?] this particular drive we were within a few miles of our destination when a snow

Library of Congress

and sleet storm caught us. The wind was driving the snow and sleet at a high rate of speed which caused the cattle to become unruly. The herd was giving us a great amount of trouble and we were riding hard and [fast?] trying to hold it. In fact, [we were?] satisfied to keep the animals milling and were not thinking of moving forward towards town.

“The animals were bent on running with the storm and we had been riding about two hours without getting father towards the pass and a chance [for sleep?]. We were getting cold and tired and decided to make a supreme effort to move forward, but the moment we tried it the critters started to break into a run. One of the waddies lost his temper and grabbed his slicker then started waving it at the herd saying, 'run dam your hides if that is what you want to do'. Well, the animals took him at his word and went into their best speed. 6

“The cattle scattered in every direction and in that storm, with a high gale blowing, it was impossible to follow the animals. Visibility was reduced to about 50 feet and that prevented us from seeing where the different bunches of cattle were running. After a few minutes of trying to do something, we decided to let the cattle go until the storm subsided. We rode into town and went to bed. The next day we had to pay the fiddler by going on a hunt for the herd. We had good luck and were able to pick up the herd the second day. We found the cattle in bunches here and there, but only had a loss of 12 head and those may have returned to the Flying Circle later. The 'CY' ranch was in the vicinity and we figured that the strays would get in with the 'CY' cattle and show up in the next roundup.

“The greatest part of my time was spent working with the horses. There was a vast difference in the nature of horses and cattle about staying on the range. The horse will stay range where it is born, unless the animal is driven off, or forced off because of a shortage in grazing feed or water. Therefore, the horses required very little attention to [be kept?] on the home range and not much attention otherwise.

“The principal [work?] was wrangling horses and we broke about 100 horses each Spring and Fall. I did most of the wrangling with the assistance of two waddies.

Library of Congress

"I shall give an explanation of the method we used to break a wild horse to the saddle and to being handled.

"The males were castrated at the end of their first year 7 and broken to the saddle during their fourth year.

"The first step in breaking a horse was to rope it and for that work we had corrals. The two corrals were adjacent to each other. One was an ordinary corral and the other was a round enclosure. The chute leading into the ordinary corral was a V shaped winged affair. Instead of roping the horses on the range and fighting the animal into the corral or breaking the animal out on the range, we would herd the horses, cut out for wrangling, into the chute and then crowd the animals into the ordinary corral. Then a few at a time were driven into the round corral. Picking one horse at a time, it would be roped and thrown. Then a halter was put on the horse and a 50 foot rope fastened to the halter. Of course, the roped animal would not lead and would be dragged out of the corral. We had a log that was heavy enough to hold the horse from running or walking off, but light enough so it could move the timber. We tied the horse to the log and left it there until we were satisfied it had learned its lesson

"After several hours of being tied, the horse would learn the the rope would hold it and that the rope was its master. The horse, also, learned that when it stepped forward the act would ease the pressure on its neck and what pain was being caused.

"The purpose of using a movable log, was to prevent injury to the horse's neck when the animal jerk and reared in its attempt to break loose. If a stationary log was used, the pressure of the rope making contact against the cervical vertebra would put these members in a mal-position. The mal-position 8 interfered cervical nerves nervating the neck muscles, which resulted in a partial paralysis of certain neck muscles. Then, so long as the paralysis existed, and it was permanent in most cases, the animal would carry its

Library of Congress

head down. We called the [?] limber-neck. A horse effected with limber-neck was useless as a cattle horse.

“Many wild horses were ruined while being wrangles, because of improper ties, before it was learned to use a moving object and one that would give enough to prevent too much pressure.

“When a horse [indicated?] it had the idea that it could move forward and relieve the pressure on its neck, it was ready for the next lesson.

“The next lesson was teaching the animal to be led. It had the idea to step forward to prevent the [?] pressure, so I [would?] pull on the rope and the animal would step forward. I repeated the pulls until the horse showed a tendency to be [?] a little. That is , the animal had the idea what was wanted.

“The next step was not a lesson, but one of preparing the animal for work. To prevent mud and burrs from balling up on the animals tail, we pulled out a certain portion of the tail's hair. That [also prevented?] accidents while two waddies were riding at the side of each other.

“A horse with a long tail will switch it more or less. It often has happened that the horse's tail would catch in the [spurs?] of the waddy at its side. If the horse pitched, which 9 most animals would do when a pull on its tail was felt, a [possible?] injury could result form a spill.

“To prevent the horse from kicking, while, we were pulling the tail hairs, we [r n?] the rope from the halter between its front legs and back to one hind leg, which was tied up off of the ground a short distance. When the tail job was done the next lesson was given to the horse.

Library of Congress

"While the animal had its leg still tied, we fussed around its back, gently waved a slicker around it, gently slapped it. The animal soon [?] understand that I was not going to hurt it. Its understanding would be indicated by its action. After getting the animal's confidence the next process took place.

"The animal was placed in the [round?] corral and a saddle placed on it and the head pulled to one side and tied there. It would then be driven, [and?] of [course?], the animal would travel in a circle in the direction towards the way its head was tied. After traveling for some time, the head position would be changed to the opposite side, and that act would repeated several times.

"Traveling in a circle with its head tied soon taught the horse to turn in the direction the head was pulled. Therefore, the horse soon learned to respond to the pull of the hackamore. All these lessons were given with as little force possible.

"At the conclusion of the lesson in the round corral, the animal was mounted by a rider.

"I estimate that I have wrangled approminately 1000 horses and in all that number I have had only four to pitch with me, after I had put the animals through the preliminary training I 10 have just related.

"The method I used was vasesly different from the system used by the early day wrangler, which was to rope a horse and by force place a saddle on its back, and then ride the animal. The early day wrangler would rack the animal's side with the spurs and whip its ears with his hat. Of course the horse would buck and pitch and it would do so till it did not have strenght to continue. However, many of the wild horses pitched until it ruined itself. Any tame horse will pitch under such treatment.

"A horse being wrangled under the old system, [ould?] pitch until it learned that it could not throw the rider, then resigned itself to its faith. Thereafter, it required weeks before the

Library of Congress

horse would [respond so?] that it was any pleasure to work it. Using the method I did, the horse would be working well within a week to ten days.

“Training the horse for cutting work was amusing to watch. The method was to rope a steer and with the rope tied to the horn of the saddle [turn?] the two animals loose, to fight it out. At first, when the steer tauted the rope, the horse would be jerked to the ground, because the horse did not know what was coming. The horse would immediately start fighting to get on its feet and would be pulled down several times before it succeeded, but it would finally get a footing. When the horse regained its feet the animal would brace itself and then the steer would go down. The two animals would have a tug-of-war and the horse would have the best of the fight, because the horse was pulling by the saddle and had the leverage of its entire body. The steer pulling with rope around its neck did not have the leverage and would be pulled down after the horse had braced itself.

“It did not take many lessons of that nature before the horse learned to brace itself soon as the rope landed on a critter.

“It is surprising how quick a horse will learn what is necessary and will work without much guiding, and the horse seemed to enjoy the work, especially jerking a steer down.

“In relation to our amusements there is not much to tell about. Generally when our days work was completed we were ready for sleep and rest. During my career on the range, the days of shootings and gun fights were over. Not all of the cowboys carried a gun. Some of the old rawhides carried their six-gun, but they carried the gun because of a habit and not because it was necessary.

“I worked for the Flying Circle for eight years and then terminated my range career. After quitting the range I took up stenography and I followed that profession until 1932 when I received the appointment of [?] [Court?] Commissioner. I have served in the position of

Library of Congress

U. . Court Commissioner of the Northern District of Texas, at the Fort Worth Court since receiving the appointment, but still am fond of the horse.